



United in Nostalgia?

Content Analysis of Personal and Historic Nostalgia in Flemish Magazine Advertisements

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Background

- Vintage and retro consumption
- Nostalgia offers a way to cope with discontinuities in the present (Davis, 1979; Sedikides et al., 2008)
- Belgium 2011-2012: socio-political and economic turmoil

Nostalgia

"A **preference** (general liking, positive attitude, or favorable affect) towards **objects** (people, places, or things) that were **common** (popular, fashionable, or widely circulated) **when one was younger** (in early adulthood, in adolescence, in childhood, or even before birth)"

(Holbrook and Schindler, 1991: p. 330)

Personal nostalgia childhood / home

"the desire to return to a constructed and idealized past which belongs to the **personal memories** and/or events of the consumer"

(Stern, 1992)

Mostly experienced by older consumers

- Rich set of personal experiences (Baker & Kennedy, 1994, p. 171)
- Facing fast changing society (proneness)

Historic nostalgia the good old days

"the desire to retreat from contemporary life by returning to a time in the **distant past** viewed as superior to the present"

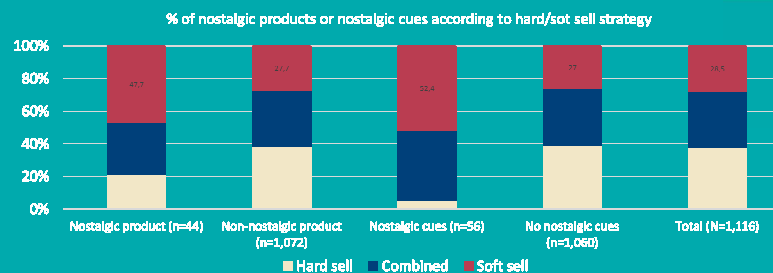
(Stern, 1992)

Appealing across generations

- Esthetics help youth to escape (Sedikides et al., 2008)
- Nostalgic bonding occurs in early life stages (Holbrook & Schindler, 1996)

Hypotheses

- 1) Nostalgic cues occur in times of crisis
- 2) Nostalgic ads most prevalent in food, lifestyle and conspicuous products
- 3) Historic nostalgia dominates personal nostalgia
- 4) Nostalgic ads target women over men
- 5) Use of historic and personal nostalgia varies across targeted age groups



Results

- **5%** of ads contain nostalgia: Food/drinks (19,6%), culture (16,1%) fashion (16,1%)
- Nostalgic products ($\chi^2 (2, N=1,116) = 9.478; p = .008$) and cues ($\chi^2 (2, N=1,116) = 35.321; p = .000$) appear most in **soft sell**
- **Historic nostalgia** (67,9%) dominates personal nostalgia (32,1%) regardless product, magazine or target group

Female orientation:

- more nostalgic cues in female magazines
- higher number of nostalgic cues/ad
- nostalgic ads target M/F (60,7%) or F only (28,6%)

Age ~ symbolism:

- elderly: customs and values of the past
- youth: a certain era / 'zeitgeist' or traditional brand

Nostalgic themes within nostalgic ads (in %)

The good old days	78.6
Symbolic era	47.6
Old brand	33.3
Authenticity	26.2
Family	16.7
Patriotism	7.1

Sample (N = 1,116)

According to Magazine | July 2012-June 2013¹

	N	%		N	%
Elle	358	32.1	Ché	78	7
Actief wonen	176	15.8	Autogids	77	6.9
Knack	119	10.7	Culinaire Ambiance	75	6.7
Nest	100	9	Sport/Voetbal Magazine	48	4.3
Humo	85	7.6			

¹ 9 x 6 random editions of magazines with high circulation, only ads covering $\geq 1/3$ page were included

Coding & Analysis

- a) Magazine features + ad identification
- b) Hard/soft sell: rational, emotional or both (Muehling & Pascal, 2011)
- c) Nostalgic themes (Unger et al., 1991)
- d) Types of nostalgia: Nostalgic product or nostalgic ad | Personal / historic nostalgia

Intercoder reliability (N = 142) ranged from $\alpha = .494$ to $\alpha = 1.000$ (Mean = 0.816)

Discussion

- Limited sample of nostalgic ads
- Longitudinal studies (crisis moments)
- Coding schemes from literature emphasize historic nostalgia
- Personal nostalgia hard to grasp \Rightarrow Possible 'blind spot'

Future research

- **Qualitative** definition of nostalgic cues across gender, age and ethnicities
- Pre-testing **cues** for future experiments (e.g., variances in self-referencing thoughts)
- Cognitive and affective **consequences** of individual and collective memories

Key references
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